

It is possible that such a behaviour is very rare, and could perhaps be interpreted more as bouts of abnormal leisure activity than

anything else. However, this is the first instance of such aggressive mounting behaviour noted among Indian ducks.

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7. OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR OF
IMPERIAL EAGLE (*AQUILA HELIACA*) IN KEOLADEO
NATIONAL PARK, BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN

On the morning of 8 January, 1986, while we were punting through one of the jheels of Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan, I saw an adult imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) sitting on a thick bed of grass, *Paspalum distichum*. From the feathers scattered all around, it appeared that it had preyed on a duck.

Seeing me approaching, the eagle tried to take to its wings, but it could not, probably because the wings and tail were soaking wet. The eagle flapped its wings and tried to run. It could not do so very fast because of the thick grass.

When I neared the eagle, it showed a peculiar behaviour. It lay on its back, with its legs upward and head down among the thick grass. The toes were held tightly and there was no movement and the bird appear-

ed dead. When I touched the bird with a bamboo stick, it started pecking at the stick. This behaviour was observed continuously for 15 minutes. When I moved away, the bird got up, walked for a few metres and spread its wings and tail, probably for drying in the warmth of the sun and flew away after about 45 minutes.

This behaviour by the eagle was probably a desperate distraction display as it was unable to escape. Raptors are known to give threat displays when they are cornered (Brown 1976, Newton 1979). But behaviour as seen here is intriguing.

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